Uniform Appearance
The Neoclassic Male Body

Keywords: uniforms / masculinity / eighteenth century

Abstract

This paper explores the way in which military uniforms in the 'industrious age' on the cusp of modernity, kick started the industrial revolution. The enormous quantities of clothing and accoutrements used by both the French and the British, resulted in new systems of manufacture. It was not only the making of uniforms, but the way in which the soldier represented the body politic: making the power of the monarch tangible. It also changed the meaning of clothing and the connection between private and public, society and the subject. The uniformed soldier held a position of high status in eighteenth century society.

Much has been written on influence of the Pompeii excavations on neoclassic women's fashions. The connection between the female nude statues and the possibility of nakedness in dress was apparent particularly in France. However the influence on male fashion has been either dismissed outright or inadequately explored. Through intensive research on male military clothing of the late eighteenth century it has become apparent that a masculinity emerged which sought to replicate the classic body through military dress using helmets, epaulettes, the cropped Hussar jacket, the tight white breeches and particularly the horse (as an extension of the uniform).

This paper argues that the key role of military uniforms is the performance of masculine gender and nationalism. This will be shown using military portraits such as Joshua Reynolds's Banastre Tarleton (1782).

Figure 1. *Banastre Tarleton (1782)* by Joshua Reynolds National Gallery, London

Introduction

This paper explores the way in which military uniforms in the ‘industrious age’ kick started the industrial revolution. In the eighteenth century enormous quantities of clothing and accoutrements were required by various European armies and navies, such as the Prussians, French and the British. This resulted in new systems of manufacture, rather than new technologies. It was not only the construction of uniforms, but the way in which the soldier represented the body politic: making the power of the monarch, and increasingly the state, tangible. It also heightened the meaning of dress and the connection between private and public, society and the subject. Through this the uniformed soldier held a position of high status in eighteenth century society.

Much has been written on the influence of the Pompeii and Herculaneum excavations on neoclassic women’s fashions. The connection between the female nude statues and the possibility of nakedness in dress was apparent, particularly in France. However the influence on male fashion has been either dismissed outright or inadequately explored. Through intensive research on male military clothing of the late eighteenth century it has become apparent that a masculinity emerged which sought to replicate the classic body through military dress using

helmets, epaulettes, the cropped jacket, the tight white breeches and as well as the horse which is considered here as an extension of the uniform. ‘Heroic’ masculinity arises.

Through using the military portrait Banastre Tarleton (1782) by Joshua Reynolds I argue that military dress was the vanguard of male fashion in the late eighteenth century. Neoclassic male fashions occurred earlier in military uniforms than in civilian fashion. By positioning heroic masculinity within the range of masculinities I suggest that the key role of military uniforms is the performance of masculine gender through the framework of Judith Butler’s theories of performativity. I also argue that anthropologist, Marcel Mauss’s ‘techniques of the body’ (1973, p.73) influences Tarleton’s pose used by Reynolds to portray this hero of the War of Independence.

Eighteenth Century Masculinity

Reynold’s full sized portrait *Colonel Banastre Tarleton (1782)*, painted two weeks after Tarleton’s return from the American War of Independence, is exemplary of male participation in neo-classical fashion. Susan North posits that men’s fashions adapted less readily to the neoclassical demands (North, 2007, p.21) Aileen Riberio herself charts the introduction of rather exotic male clothing in the eighteenth century, yet, argues that there had not been profound changes in men’s dress in the period (Ribeiro, 1984, p.18) Arguably the three piece suit, originating in the late seventeenth century, had remained constant throughout the next century although, undergoing refinement.

However, there was a plurality of masculinities in the period and most, if not all, were represented through very specific dress practices. Even if as most dress historians do, draw information from the narrow range of élite and *haute couture* fashions to indicate period and change, the variety of masculinities appeared and disappeared like changeability of fashion itself in the eighteenth century. If tasks carried out require gender specific actions, and gender is socially articulated and changeable, then a learned gender trait can be unlearned. Gender is created by the performance itself (Butler, 1999, 2004).

Writing from the twenty-first century there is a reliance on visual representations and writings which engaged in description of the preferred masculinity, such as the hegemonic view of masculinity defined by possessing a male body and adhering to heterosexuality. Although this paper concurs with this view, it considers the heroic masculinity within the range of eighteenth

century masculinities. Perhaps there were some masculinities that went unremarked. Indeed those who performed and practiced ‘female masculinity’, which includes cross-dressers in the eighteenth century, were very successful and avoided any attention on purpose (Peoples, 2007).

The masculinities that engaged attention were those that caught the attention of writers and artists who attempted to classify, described taxonomies and models of masculinities. Those considered being outside the normative or preferred masculinity were a fertile source for cartoonists and printmakers. These artists created very descriptive typologies of groups, such as the ostentatiously dressed men known as macaronies. Others included the fop, the molly, even the pirate and the ‘female soldier’. Gender theorists, such as Halberstam, remind readers that, within subcultures, descriptions go beyond that of the taxonomies of sexologists and popular culture; there exists far more elaborate, imaginative or flamboyant taxonomies (Halberstam, 1998, p.47). As well, Trumbach in his investigation of eighteenth century sodomites and mollies highlights that dress codes are intrinsic to these identities (Trumbach, 1998, pp.161-176). Dress signified these archetypes, whether subtle (read only by those who knew and understood) or overt. Men’s dress in the eighteenth century was varied and underwent a great deal of change. Uniforms are an excellent source to trace heroic masculinity as they are a ready-made symbol.

Banastre Tarleton

Military uniforms reflected an overt heroic masculinity and this is apparent in Reynold’s portrait of Banastre Tarleton. Although Tarleton was the son of an English sea trader, who made money from sugar and slaves, the young Banastre was able to move in the same social circle as the Prince of Wales. And indeed to have his portrait painted by Reynolds was also a marker of wealth and status. The wealth that flowed from Tarleton’s family allowed the young buck to buy an officer’s commission after having gambled much of his inherited wealth away: a military commission was perceived to be the only path left for a career for a man of wealth nearing the end of his financial resources.

The ability of Tarleton to buy a commission reflects the changing paradigm of moving from dynastic armies whereby hereditary nobles held most of the commissioned officer positions to that of the Purchase System. For those without the ‘noble patent’ those outside royalty could experience difficulties like arbitrary limits on promotion (Addington, 1994, p.2). For some like

Tarleton with private means, an influential wealthy patron or the new mercantile money, the shift from the wealthy landed gentry (associated with royalty) in command, to men from wealthy mercantilist families allowed other men to lead regiments such as Tarleton's Legion. The military uniform allowed transgression across social class; it was a passport with widening possibilities.

It is claimed that Reynolds was not interested in contemporary dress. He argued that modern dress was not suitable for 'inherent greatness' (Irwin, 1997, p.169). However, it is the dialectic relationship between the body, uniform and body language that is of interest here. This large and imposing portrait of Tarleton is hung just above head height in the Sackler Room of the National Gallery in London. This room is devoted to art of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It is interestingly paired with another Reynold's portrait, *Captain Robert Orme (1756)*. While these two 'Georgian sentries', as Hallett (2004, p.42) calls them, both depict military defeat, yet, they portray two very different eighteenth century élite masculinities dressed in uniforms.

Figure 2. Captain Robert Orme (1756) by Joshua Reynolds Nation Gallery London

Orme's uniform, with red coat and dark blue facings, grey waistcoat and buff breeches, is gentleman in full control of his horse. He stands with a note in his hand ready to mount. The

uniform is that of the Coldstream Guards and, although painted twenty six years earlier, it also reflects through the posture the constant drill and maneuvers practiced to gain full control of the body. He was a ‘soldier of the line’. The idea that the individual body can be a site for inscription and control, a ‘political anatomy’ as Foucault termed it, arose early in the eighteenth century (Foucault, 1977, p.135). It was not enough to wear military dress or master the tools and techniques of war, the soldier, sailor and marine had to master themselves.

Tarleton’s pose, I believe, reflects a new dynamic in fighting methods: the skirmish. This was developed by the French. Tarleton was infamous for not waiting for line formation by the opposition, preferring to attack and catching out those unprepared. The skirmish can be seen in terms of Romanticism: acting on the emotions. The close order, or soldier of the line belongs to the Enlightenment: a combination of the rational and the aesthetic.

In the Tarleton portrait the horizon line sits at one quarter of the way up the painting, with the officer before the tumultuous smoke and action of the American War of Independence. Although the figures and horses are against a backdrop of war, the landscape is not particular or able to be pinpointed geographically. The smoke may well indicate a veiling of the British defeat. The Tarleton figure stands clear of the action in absolute authority and the pose is dynamic. He is placed in the limelight with his head turned towards the prospect before him.

Although Reynolds was supposedly not concerned with the clothing worn by sitters, he was attentive to the pose: the alert head turned, hand on hilt, buckling it to his side, (or as Potterton suggests tying his leggings), his foot raised on a fallen cannon, all in readiness for action. The posture, while not victorious, indicates Reynold’s borrowings from classical works. The pose has been much discussed. Penny suggested that the posture was reminiscent of an antique statue of Hermes buckling his sandal. This statue had just entered the Shelburne collection at the time Reynolds was working on the Tarleton portrait. Perini suggests borrowing from Tintoretto’s *The Washing of the Apostles’ Feet* as Reynolds had studied this painting in Venice. The intent of the sketches appears to be studies in light and shade. These are in his Venetian sketchbooks held at British Museum (Perini, 1994, pp.26-29).

Merz has given a more complex explanation: that Reynolds used the figure of Galatea with her head turned toward cupids in *Triumph of Galatea* by Raphael (c1512) to refer to Mary Robinson, also known as Perdita, an abandoned lover of the Prince of Wales. Tarleton moved within the

social circle of the prince and Robinson was on intimate terms with Tarleton. Merz asserts that Tarleton, in Reynold's portrait, is not buckling his sword but something more imprecise: the figure has been directly borrowed without context (Merz, 1995, pp.516-517). Galatea's foot is raised, the head is turned and the action is tumultuous. Postle refers to other borrowings by Reynolds and notes that Reynolds admitted to taking from here and there without consciously being specific of his borrowings (Manning & Postle, 2000, p440). More recently Postle suggests that his pose derives from the classical statue Cincinnatus, a cast belonging to the Royal Academy (Postle, 2005, p.252). I argue that the dynamism of the portrait and the heroic masculinity portrayed reflect the style of warfare, the skirmish, that Tarleton participated in.

Yet the costume itself reinforces the neo-classical ideals of the time. The figure-hugging jacket and the tight white buckskin breeches enhance the ideal masculine body. The whiteness of the lower half of the body emulates that of white marble of classical sculptures. Winklemann, writing in Italy in the mid eighteenth century, described rhapsodically the classical sculptures of the idealised beauty of male nudes with fulsome accounts of each part of the body (Irwin, 1997, p.29). Reynolds was aware of Winklemann's writings. As well, not only original sculptures, but also plaster casts of classic statues were making their way from Italy and Greece to England.

It is curious that when we look at other military uniforms at the time of Tarleton's portrait, they do not reflect the neoclassical model. On the one hand, civilian male clothing was paring down towards what J C Flugel termed as the 'great masculine renunciation' or to what Kuchta calls as 'inconspicuous consumption' (Flugel, 1950, p.30; Kutcha, 1996, p.55). The colours of clothing became darker more somber and modest, overt decoration was dispensed with and the fashion moved away from what was called effeminacy (a term that fitted between masculinity and femininity). The archetype of male civilian fashion reflecting the neoclassic is Beau Brummell. He was in the limelight in the 1790s. Tarleton's portrait is painted in 1782.

On the other hand military dress for officers was increasingly becoming more ostentatious and flamboyant in the late eighteenth century, reaching a peak in the Napoleonic wars of the nineteenth century. The efflorescence of the British, French and Prussians uniforms made it an ordeal just wearing the uniform, let alone fighting in them. By sifting through images of officers taking part in the American War of Independence there appears to be a broad range of uniforms worn. These included those such as the Loyalists, the Rebels, the French and the Germans. What was worn here tended towards the utilitarian rather than the flamboyance of uniforms

devised in Europe. From this variety worn by the opposition a clue to how Tarleton's dress came about can be gleaned.

The uniform

Before moving directly to the Tarleton's specific uniform the context of military uniforms needs some explanation. Systematically preparing male bodies for war came about with the breakdown of feudalism and the rise of the notion of nationhood in Europe. Before the seventeenth century a soldier or sailor was equipped for the job, much like any carpenter or plumber. By the eighteenth century, great numbers of men representing the idea of the nation, required large quantities of suitable dress. The contemporary technology and economic conditions in England allowed for the first mass-produced clothing, and this essentially was a catalyst to the industrial revolution (Wilson, 2003, p.265). Although this was not the mass-production of the nineteenth century there was large scale production of standardised clothing, which became the norm for clothing the military forces (Breward, 1995; Lemire, 1997; Styles, 1993). Bulk orders of dyed cloth, limited in colour, for uniforms were easier to execute and therefore more economical. Although France, with its well established textile industry, was one of the earlier countries to sport uniforms *en masse*, it was Britain that was able to systematise the making of uniforms on a grand scale. The 'classic industrial revolution' had not got underway, yet the demand for the 'industrious' revolution had (Styles, 1993).

The markers of status are integral to military organisation. The combination of dress with the artificial excesses of hair, wigs and headgear were used as a vehicle to communicate hierarchy in the eighteenth century. However, the uniform in the Reynolds portrait seems to be very unusual as the fashion for short cropped jackets does not appear in visual representations of uniforms, nor contemporary civilian fashions. Raddall notes that the uniform worn by a young English officer, John Graves Simcoe (aged 26), who led the Simco Rangers, had chosen a uniform of green that would act as camouflage within the landscape. This uniform contrasted with the red coats of the British regulars. The green was worn while they trained and exercised in the woods (Raddall, 1947, p.2).

Green was the colour that was associated with the regiment. Tarleton's cavalry troop, initially known as the British Legion, was under the command of General Cornwallis, yet, became known as Tarleton's Green Horse or Green Dragoons then Tarleton's Legion.

This move toward utilitarianism in uniforms was not new but it is a rare feature of eighteenth century military uniforms. The French *chasseurs* (hunters) wore green (Martin, 1998, p.72). Tarleton modeled his legion on the Simco Rangers in composition and uniforms. Tarleton's men wore a short green jacket with black roll collar, white buckskin breeches and black riding boots for the cavalry or long black gaiters for the infantry. The head gear was a black leather cap. The dragoons wore cross-belts to hold the bayonet and cartridge box (Raddall, 1947, p.3). When described as such it is difficult to imagine the terror that these men invoked. The animation of the body, along with highly skilled horse riding, and the context of war compounded to intensify the meaning of the uniform.

Raddall notes that another regiment, the 17th Light Dragoons who were raised in England wore *the* most striking uniform in the British army. They wore tall brass helmets, each dangling a scarlet-dyed horse tail, each with a chin strap, tight red jackets, white breeches and long jack boots. The southern heat must have made this stiff and heavy uniform very uncomfortable but it is said that despite the wear and tear the men refused to discard them for the cooler green of the Legion. The loyalty that the uniform inveigled meant that they preferred to repair than replace them (Raddall, 1947, p.3). These were 'soldiers on the line', preferring to fight in formation unlike Tarleton's Green Horse regiment who advanced in skirmishes.

By this stage military jackets had been well cut away at the hip revealing and displaying the genital area, the whiteness of the trousers showed every fold, bump and crease. Most of the British officers' uniforms were still long swallow tailed coats while with Tarleton's jacket the cropping on the hips continued around the back. The breeches worn by Tarleton indicate that he was a man of high social rank. Only lower class workers and lower ranking soldiers wore full-length trousers. This notion of class, reflected in pants length, was undergoing change at the time of the portrait, initially through the democratic ideals resulting from American War of Independence that Tarleton was fighting in, but later more dramatically through the French Revolution whereby the *sans culottes* (without breeches) wore the pants of the Marseille water side workers, a *carmagnole* (small jacket) and a red Phrygian hat. This style of clothing was directly linked to political ideals.

As well length, the tightness of the officer's pants also indicates rank. Lower classes wore looser clothing so as not to inhibit movement while working. Barnes notes that officers' breeches were so tight at the end of the eighteenth century that it was 'a hazardous achievement to pick

anything up from the ground' (Barnes, 1954, p.60). Tight pants, woven on stocking looms, gave the riders close contact with and control of their horses. The English riding manner was to control the horse with the legs rather than bridle. Kelly notes that these pants gave the appearance of nakedness (Kelly, 2005, p. 126). This, I believe is the male equivalent of the near nakedness of fashionable chemises worn during the neoclassical period.

Tarleton's knee-high Hessian riding boots also show him as an upper ranking member of the military. Ankle high boots were the lot of the lower rank soldiers, marching was their form of transport (David, 2003, p.117). Spurs, which indicated an association with horses, can be just seen on the left boot in Reynolds's portrait. Horses were for cavalry officers, such as Tarleton. The curious thing about these boots is that they are German not English riding boots. The amount of leather required for high status boots was a luxury. Leather for the making of shoes was dependent on meat consumption. Leather can be defined as a 'residual' product. The British were viewed as prosperous beef-eaters whereas the French who ate little meat were touted as 'ragged French frog eater[s]' wearing wooden clogs. The French Revolution led to a control of the leather market to ensure a constant supply of boots and shoes for the growing national army (Riello, 2007). Understanding the supply and demand facilitates in comprehending how status is mark out in the style of foot wear.

To be a member of such a British cavalry division, as Tarleton was, required financial resources. The expense of not only purchasing and maintaining a costly and fancy costume but also included within the concept of the uniform of these regiments was the horse.[1] (But, of course, not just any horse as the paintings of horses by George Stubbs will attest to. Exotic and imported breeds carried far more status and were able to be trained as a war technology. Regiments required specific and uniform colourings and markings.) Expenses were not only in purchasing the horse, but the accoutrements, maintenance and, as indicated in his portrait by Reynolds, extra labour, as in a manservant or a subordinate. Assistance was needed to maintain the image and build on social status.

[1] Displaying that status in decorative uniforms and equine equipment became apparent in my recent research in London, whereby embroiderers, such as Hand and Lock, and military tailors worked in close association with saddlers and harness manufacturers. The archive showed designs for embroidered insignia which would then be sent on to the saddlers to be assembled in horse accoutrements.

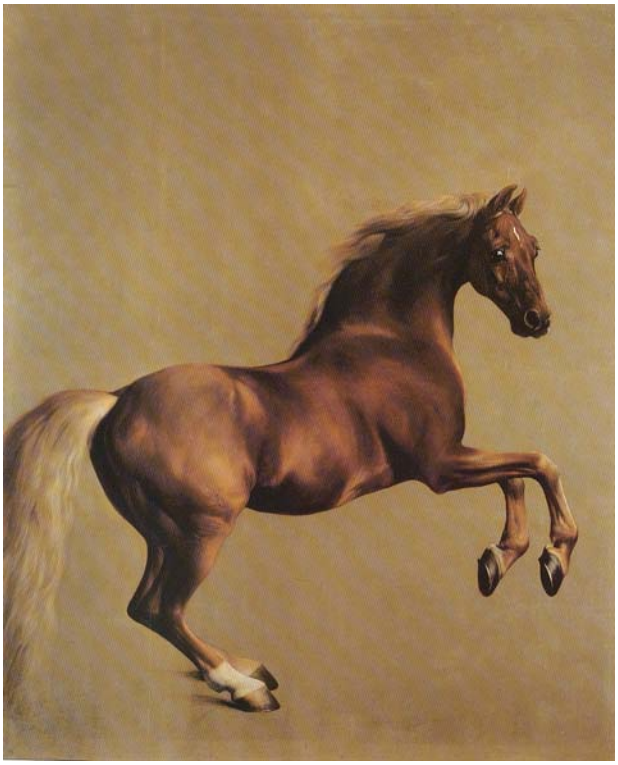

Figure 3. Whistlejacket (1762) by George Stubbs National Gallery, London

In the painting the horse's eyes bulge with fear. Landry explores the way in which images of rulers controlling horses were used to reflect discipline and control of subjects (Landry, 2005). Tarleton was an impetuous man, attacking before the full complement of troops was in place. Reynolds may have been indicating this trait, by using another figure to control the horses, as though indicating Tarleton had little self-control. Or turning his back on the commotion and chaos he caused.

In the portrait the whiteness of the linen shirt worn by Tarleton, indicated his level of 'cleanliness'. In the eighteenth century cleanliness indicated manners; here in this image white linen points to a supposed gentleman. Roche draws attention to the way in which linen shirts were used to freshen and cleanse the body when the shirt was changed: 'it was a sign of a system of cleanliness based on the rejection of water … (Roche, 1994, p.178). Also the whiteness could indicate less physical involvement or Tarleton had ready access to maintaining his image even on the battle field. However, he was known to initiate some bloody skirmishes and had earned the name of 'Bloody Ban' or the 'The Butcher'. New or even a change of clothing was not available during the war.

Apart from the arguably classically inspired stance and the marble white legs, the headgear is clearly drawn from ancient Roman dress. This type of leather cap with the front leather peak and fur crest became known as a Tarleton helmet or jockey cap (Rankin, 1976, p.10) These leather helmets, hard and polished, and looking like a small round iron pot, appear in the late eighteenth century and are very close to the Roman Gladiator helmet (Rankin, p.55). This is another indication of the close association between military uniforms and the neoclassical.

Tarleton's hairstyle is closely cropped rather than wearing a powdered wig or hair tied into a queue as in the Orme portrait. Army officers had worn wigs since the middle of the seventeenth century, as did men of all but the very lowest class. It was perceived that male authority was invested in wigs (Pointon, 1993, p.176). For the military the wigs gave a uniform image, assisted in managing appearance and showed control of the 'natural' body. Controlling hair, which is innately independent of fashion, needed constant attention and manipulation. Control reflected discipline. Tarleton's 'natural' style was unusual. The shorter hair style is associated with that of Roman sculptures.

Techniques of the body

It was not enough to be dressed well, as Tarleton appears in the portrait. The concept of military uniforms does not occur by clothing bodies alone. Uniforms make power tangible. The uniform is animated by the body and the body by the uniform. The markers of status are integral to military organisation and the combination of dress with the artificial excesses such as hair, wigs and headgear were used as a vehicle in the eighteenth century to communicate hierarchy, and assisted in forming part of the fashionable élite. The way the body moved when dress in uniforms was just as important.

The military body has its own 'techniques of the body' as Mauss termed it (Mauss, 1973, p.73). The soldier has a particular gait derived from constant training. While French court life and military costuming were closely followed by the rest of the European royal houses, it was the drill and maneuvers developed by Maurice of Nassau and extended by Frederick II of Germany that was much admired by other military tacticians. Foucault called Frederick II the 'meticulous king of small machines' who insisted on controlling the body through well-trained regiments and long exercises. Foucault explored the notion of gesture and carriage of the body in his work on the 'docile body'. The idea that the individual body can be a site for inscription and control, a

'political anatomy' as he termed it, arose in the eighteenth century (Foucault, 1977, p.135). The close association of dress and 'contrived body techniques' (Craik, 2007). The close association of dress and 'contrived body techniques' are vital to my argument. It was not enough to wear military dress or master the tools and techniques of war, the soldier, sailor and marine had to master themselves. Tarleton, I believe, was a proponent of the skirmishes' freer action and this is reflected in his stance[2].

Nationalism

McClintock cogently argues in *Imperial Leather* that the three realms of gender power, race and empire are inextricably linked and acknowledges that they can often set up arguments that are contradictory and conflicting (McClintock, 1995). I have added class, as like masculinity, nationalism varies through the experience of class. Tarleton's notion of nationalism was quite different from low ranking soldiers. Part of Tarleton incentive in fighting was to preserve his family's business connections in Newfoundland, New England and the Caribbean (as well, the slave trade).

As the British Empire grew in the eighteenth century the idea of belonging to the nation included a fringe that would find it quite difficult to occupy a central position of society. Members of former British colonies settling in England have demonstrated this. However, the military uniform enabled transgression of nation rather than race. The 'trickle-down, bubble-up'/seepage theory comes into play (Hebdige, 1979; Polhemus 2007) Abler supports this in *Hinterland Warriors and Military Dress*: with appropriation of uniforms comes the ability to represent the power of nation The enemy is not so much pacified with uniforms but the uniform is a mechanism to visually bridge social and racial difference (Abler, 1999). The arousal of popular unity through the use of uniforms illustrates that nationalism is invented and performed.

Recognition is essential in identifying enemies. How can distinction be made when the Hussars, Lancers and Light Dragoons all had uniforms derived from the Hungarian and Polish costumes? For the English, French, Russians or Germans the use of these uniforms was hardly portrayed national identity. In one way they were all conforming to an ideal of what a high ranking officer of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries should look like and became so well embedded in

[2] Flesher explores the difference between the Enlightenment's 'soldier of the line' with 'close order tactics' and the emerging Romantic value of impassioned action as show in the 'skirmish' used by the French. Mary Mosher Flesher, "Repetitive Order and the Human Walking Apparatus: Prussian Military Science Versus the Webers' Locomotion Research," *Annals of Science* 54, no. 5 (1997).

European military culture. Tarleton's uniform differed enormously from these. In particular the head gear he wore subsequently became, at least well into the nineteenth century, the very symbol of élite British officers.

How the various hussars and dragoons distinguished from each other was through the expressive encapsulation their own cultural psyche. Synchronizing *aesthetics*, *cultural practice* and *cultural articulation* was necessary (Craik, 2006, p.2) Craik asserts that the aesthetic dimension refers to the cut, composition and choice of clothing, preference for particular motifs, the techniques of the body in wearing the dress. The British military forces preferred the use of wool (as it supported the landed gentry), the decoration used referred to historical events, the soldier's bodies were shaped by training and the tailors enhanced the preferred shape of the body. The cultural practices refer to the uptake and consumption of dress that signals the specific relations between the body and the cultural domain. The uptake of the eastern European dress to the point of recognition, at a popular level, and appropriation was through cultural articulation. The cultural articulation of the military body was through, not only warfare, but through display in 'socioscopic' activities or polite leisure. These activities included such as promenading through pleasure gardens, at the theatre and in the participation of military parades and spectacles. The internal and external perception needs to coincide: the officers had internalised particular techniques of the body, their gait and posture, combined with dress to produce a British style that was admired at home and abroad. Synchronising aesthetics is complex but it is often on an unconscious level and performing it on the battlefield becomes second nature.

Conclusion

The British were defeated in the War of the American Revolution. No legion was more infamous than those who fought under Tarleton. According to Raddall it was 'the best led, the most enduring, the most dashing, the most relentless, and on the whole the most successful of other Loyalist regiments'. They were also the most feared and hated by the American Rebels (Raddall, 1947). For the British, this war on the other side of the Atlantic, was a regrettable episode, not an edifying story at all. Comparatively little has been written from the British point of view.

Tarleton retained a connection with the army when he returned to England. He divided his time the military, politics and the career of a young Regency buck. He was promoted to major-

general in 1794 and then in 1812 to general. Concurrently he sat as a Member of Parliament for Liverpool from 1790 to 1812 and was given a baronetcy in 1815. However, after the war he was known more for competing with the Prince of Wales for the actress and author, Perdita, Mary Robinson, and for the green of the uniform that was devised and the helmet worn. I believe that his clothing influenced that of the British Dandy, Beau Brummell. Brummell was also able to use dress to transgress the same social boundaries that Tarleton had. The social efficacy of clothes was apparent. The children of rising middle class and mercantilists could afford the dress and the association with horses, required to move in the circle of the Prince of Wales, later King George V.

Further investigation into the site of manufacture and the system under which Tarleton's uniform was made would add to the understanding of, not only the military uniform, but also the complexities of the concept of nationalism through dress. Zakim points to the conscious opposition to British luxury in America on the eve of independence (2001, p.1553). This may have filtered through to this uniform. The pairing down of Tarleton's uniform may well have been a political response as well as fulfilling utilitarian demands. What does come through in images of the uniform is the hypermasculinity associated with warfare.

Here I have focused on some of what I perceive as the key roles that uniforms play: the performance of masculine gender, how this was played out and intensified through military uniforms, and the shaping of the body to 'fit' the uniform. I have also highlighted the often contradictory nature of this artificial dress that is embedded with the symbolic power. In late the eighteenth the military uniform century became a dominant symbol of normative masculinity in the western world. The consolidation of masculinity disrupted a variety of ideals on male bodies. At a time when fears of decadence, social degeneration and cultural effemination were widespread, military uniforms provided a valuable, incontravertable sign of superior and authentic masculinity.

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